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88/ names announced before they may come near, for the evil
304 eye must constantly be guarded against.

An animal skin is always spread on the ground for him to sit on. Food is specially prepared for him in order that he may speedily regain his strength and vigour again. He is treated as a most honoured guest in the village, and is the centre of concern.

Later on the boy is supposed to give some gift to the man who cut the tribal marks for him. Sometimes this man happens to be a very dear friend of the boy and may honour him by cutting seven cuts instead of the customary six.

The boy takes cane-stalks and peels them, cutting them into four-inch lengths. He makes a girdle or belt of them by fastening them together side by side. He may go visiting at night after his wounds are well on the way to recovery, and he always wears this belt. He also carries a long stick which has a piece of ambatch or other light wood at the end of it, and also a cluster of white feathers.

He is not allowed to go among the cattle until he is entirely well. When one asks him if his wounds are healed he will always say 'not yet', but one may find out if they are really healed by asking him if he has gone among the cattle. If not, the wounds are still sore, but if he has been with the cattle it means that the wounds are well healed, although the boy will not say so for fear some one with the evil eye should hear of it.

• [143] No pregnant woman must come near the boy until his wounds are healed; a man whose wife is pregnant must also be avoided.

301 Nuers do not wear bead necklaces after the tribal marks are cut, although strands of beads may be worn around the waist or over each shoulder and under the opposite arm. Wooden beads may be worn for a few months, then they may wear the giraffe hair necklaces.

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582 in turn helps the brother just younger than he, and so on until all are supplied with the wherewithal to get married.

The oldest daughter in a family is likewise given in marriage before her younger sisters.

Should a man have children by two wives, if one wife dies, her son—even though he may be younger than the sons of the other wife—may be allowed and helped to get married before they do, the object being to supply him with a housekeeper as speedily as possible. His half-brothers are not supposed to be in as urgent need since they have their mother to cook for them.

597 After a wife goes to live with her husband permanently,
87 if he suspects that she is paying attention to any other man, he will probably beat her; or he may beat her for any other reason if he so desires. He finds his spiked bracelet specially useful at these times.

591 The greatest desire of a Nuer woman is for children. She realizes that as long as she can bear her husband children he will care for her. Should she fail him in this her position is insecure, and he, no doubt, will try to get another wife who will be able to give him his heart's desire. The mother also realizes that her children will care for
[586] her in her old age, even if her husband does take younger wives, so her children make her position in old age secure.

603 The oldest daughter (when several years of age) goes to live with her grandmother on her mother's side, providing her mother is the oldest daughter of her grandmother, or possibly this child may be the first grand-daughter. So the grandmother is assured of help in her old age.

CHILDBIRTH AND AFTER

843 One frequently wonders how babies do manage to live in Nuerland, when one considers how little care the mother receives at the time of their birth.

She continues her work the same as usual before the baby's advent. Some neighbour woman who has helped other children into the world is probably on hand to help usher hers in. But the help given is negligible. They await nature's process, sometimes holding the mother up in a sitting posture with just her feet touching the ground. A sheep may be sacrificed to expedite matters.

When the child is born the cord is cut with a knife or a sharp piece of cane. It is not tied, and does not bleed.

The mother's food consists of gruel for some days. Then she resumes her usual diet. She cares for her baby, the neighbour woman or her mother bathing it for her for several weeks. She feeds the baby whenever it cries and usually gives it cow's milk until she has enough of her own for it.

When preparing the bath for the baby an earthen pot of water is heated. The baby is bathed in the late afternoon. The body is thoroughly greased all over, then the water (to us it seems like quite hot water) is splashed upon it, while the one who is bathing the baby rubs it briskly, massaging its back especially. Then when this part of the bath is over, she washes the child's eyes by licking them with her tongue, much as a cat would do with its kitten. The nose is also cleaned in like manner.

Various plans are resorted to in order to guard the baby from the evil eye. Charms are put upon its body, being fastened to necklace or wristlet. A rope is stretched out in the yard so that passers-by will know that strangers are not welcome.

The young mother sends word to her husband when she wants him to know about the birth of the child, so that he may come. No one asks whether it is a boy or a girl. The father may bring his wife a present of fish, and he may try to keep her supplied with fish for a little while.

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in a way this is true. The Nuer find it hard to believe that God is a God of love. Even when they learn to love Him they still find it hard to trust Him when things go wrong. But the missionaries do not get too discouraged, for, after all, is not that habit world-wide?

A large portion of the Nuer tribe has never heard the Christian message. Of those who have heard it, few have yet made full response. Yet the influence of those who honour the name of Christ will make its mark upon the Nuer and lead to the forsaking of unworthy customs inherited from the past.

Although the Arab traders throughout Nuerland are Moslem, their religion has not appealed to the Nuer; the Moslem faith has so far gained no ground in Nuerland.

SUPERSTITIONS

The Nuer mind is full of superstitions, some of them being age-old. They believe them implicitly; 'Would our parents lie to us?' they ask when any doubt is expressed. Many of the superstitions have to do with cattle (see Chapter II) and marriage (see Chapter V.)

A woman must never drink milk during her menstrual period. Nor at this time may she eat food which has been cooked in a kettle in which milk has been boiled. Why? Because to do so would harm the cattle.

If a woman is impregnated while still nursing a child, they cut a small piece off the ear of a dog and this is worn around the child's neck in order to keep it from harm. Any one walking in the footsteps of the father of this child may be the victim of dreadful things—his head may split right down the back.

If a child should have an attack of vomiting just after some strangers have been to the village, the strangers are at once suspected of having in part caused the attack.

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753 Sometimes if the mission clinic is near they hurry there at once for relief. At other times the usual form of relief is sought—a sacrifice must be offered so that the child may not be further harmed by the errant stranger.

751 An anklet or wristlet made of large wooden beads of a
● 843 certain kind of wood will protect from cuts from grass, but a man whose wife is pregnant may wear either anklet or wristlet made of red and white or black and white beads in order to accomplish the same purpose.

789 The Nuer fears a curse. Indeed, many a mysterious, inexplicable wasting away has been caused by this deep-rooted fear.

A bunch of a certain kind of grass standing up in the yard near the door will keep harm away from any sick person within.

754 The evil eye is much feared. There seems to be no definite idea as to who has this evil eye. Every one but one's own relatives must be suspected of it until one is sure that they do not possess it. The evil eye is supposed to harm whatever it sees, if it be a sick person, a sore, or even a new-born baby.

The disease becomes worse, the sore refuses to heal. All such misfortunes are attributed to the influence of the evil eye.

Patients who have ulcers to be dressed at the clinic are anxious that there be no onlookers when the sores are uncovered.

When a scar is healed but the scar tissue remains red, they plead piteously for a bandage so that they may keep it protected from the evil eye.

NUER LAW AND THE MORAL CODE

000 It is needless to say that Nuer law and their moral code are entirely different from that of our western world.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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775 As Nuer speak about *cien* it has, therefore, the sense of an
626 injustice crying out for vengeance. The essence of the concept is the notion of a wrong unrighted, of a grievance which demands, and rightly demands, redress. Even a living man who has no other way of getting justice may say to the man who has wronged him '*ba ji cien*', 'I will haunt you', meaning that though he cannot get justice now he will get it after he is dead. Nuer say that he may express this threat not in words but by looks. As in the case of the *biit*, so with the *cien*, it is God who makes the ghostly vengeance to work. Nuer say that the wronged ghost exacts vengeance by making his cause known to God, who sooner or later punishes the wrongdoer.

753 The moral action of *biit* and *cien*, which have a similarity to certain ideas of sin discussed in the next chapter, is in this respect very different for Nuer from the exercise of psychical and physical powers which have no moral foundation and are therefore not thought to involve divine judgement and intervention and are only thought of in connexion with Spirit, if at all, so far as all that happens in the world can ultimately be said to happen because God allows it and can be appealed to to change the course of
● [843] events. I refer to the evil eye (*peth*); ghouls (*roth*); the danger of pregnant women (*ther*) and to a lesser extent of their husbands,
[177] an idea some of the eastern Nuer have taken over from the Anuak;
[841] the danger of women who commence menstruation in the dry season month of *pet* (*koc mai*): the danger of a child after two or three of its elder brothers and sisters have died at, or shortly after,
[842] birth (*jul*); monorchids (*tor*), a child conceived while its mother is still suckling (*mok*); and menstruation, which is dangerous for the cattle—no woman may drink their milk at this time. If Nuer are in danger from any of these influences they may pray and sacrifice to God, but if they do so their prayers and sacrifices are mixed up with all sorts of other and different sets of ideas and they deal with the situation mainly by magical rites which would be both inappropriate and ineffective where Spirit is concerned. They therefore cannot properly be included under the rubric of religion and so lie outside the scope of this book. They are mentioned only in order that their relative unimportance may be emphasized. That in itself is of significance. Perspective would be lost were it not understood.